



OCTOBER, 1983

The I/O Connector

The Newsletter of the San Diego Atari Computer Enthusiasts

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another month has passed. I have been out of town more than been in. First I want to thank Stew Bloom and Datasoft for coming to our last meeting and giving a great demonstration of their newest programs and describing their Gentry software program. Here is a good way to get your programs distributed. I was also impressed with the Astra Disk Drive demonstrated by Larry McGuinness of Astra. It looks like a good product. It was quiet and seemed to work fine. Larry stated that they were shipping 300 a week. As soon as one of you get one give us a evaluation of it.

This month we will have someone from Optimized Systems Software (OSS) at our meeting. Hopefully it will be Bill Wilkinson. They will demonstrate their new Action Language. Also they will have BASIC XL, DOS XL and a description of their SuperCartridge. It should be an interesting meeting.

Not much news this month. As of now ATARI has not shipped the 600XL. They are having production problems as well as getting FCC approval. But they say both the 600 and 800 will be shipped by the end of next month. They better get their act together. There is a lot of empty shelves. Now I hear rumors that there will not be a 1400 or 1450 XL. I hope they are not true.

I will be retiring at the end of my term. I have enjoyed being president of your club but after 2 1/2 years I believe it is time to step down and let someone else take charge. If you are interested in a fun job as president, see me or one of the officers. Remember, it is your club. Participate!!! Also there are all kinds of perks, like a free trip to the Consumer Electronics Show, etc.

I just got back from John Harris's wedding. It was at Bass Lake, California. It was a very beautiful wedding. John married Letitia Wood. As some of you know, he was the first president of our club as well as the author of Jawbreaker, Frogger and other games. He now lives in Oakhurst, California.

The 600XL I have just been told has been shipped in selected markets and the 800XL is in the warehouse now. Also the 1400 and 1450XL are for real. I hope so, we shall see.

I just talked to Larry McGuinness of ASTRA. They have suspended shipments of their disk drives for about three weeks until they can find a more powerful power supply. It seems that after a continuous period of copying they present power transformer could blow a fuse.

That's all for now.

EDITOR'S OUTPUT

I have 10 minutes to write this column before the 11:00 p.m. news comes on. I think I'm going to type and listen.

Hard for me to believe summer is gone already. Can you believe the change in seasons? Yeah, I know, you're saying there are no seasons in San Diego. Well, you're wrong. I notice 'em. Sure, the leaves don't fall off the trees, and the white stuff only falls in the mountains. But summer is a gonner.

Far too few members seriously responded to my requests for input. To those of you who did, I thank you for your involvement.

A special note of thanks to Beverly Grimm, who submitted a detailed chart for printing different colored characters in Graphics modes one and two. Space and accuracy considerations prohibited me from typing it up for the newsletter, but if any of you are interested, I will, with her permission, put you in communication with Ms. Grimm. Thanks Bev!

Apologies to Paul Ceasar, who at this moment is somewhere in the Las Vegas area. Paul, my word processor ate your text file, and as a result, there is no Best Buys column or your review of Zaxxon. Whooops.

Welcome back to Ron Miller and his Forth Avenue. Ron survived several months of writing a word processor in FORTH for Syn-Apps. Welcome back, Ron.

Thanks to Norm Davis for his contribution; to Chuck Fowler for the cartoons; to Fritz Porter for his opinions; and to the Prez, Dick Hiatt for the rest. You know, we'll be forming a nominating committee for the President's position. That should be a challenging assignment.

Peter Payne, are you out there? This young man (age 16) has supposedly volunteered (!) to organize and maintain a Central City disk library. Mr. Payne is said to be a new member. We can certainly appreciate more new members like him. Peter, if this is true, please get in touch with Chuck Fowler or Dick Hiatt for further direction.

This is my second to the last newsletter. Yes, I've made up my mind to leave the Editor's spot at the end of the year. So it's up for grabs. If you are interested, please let me know (483-9156) as soon as possible. There are a few things you'll need to know. It's a chance to feel the pulse of the Atari groups across the nation; find out the latest poop; make contacts; receive kickbacks, etc. I recommend it highly. As for me, I will still be around. You'll see me as a contributing editor. I don't know what I'm going to say, but I'll be in there. You should be too.

SPECIAL REPORTS

The desert wastes that sprawl dusty and alone across the Journey of the Dead near Alamogordo, New Mexico have borne the blistering scars of infamy. Most notable of these was the successful test of the first atomic device 38 years ago. High atop a steel-beamed blast tower, the Gadget, as it was known to the longhairs who created it, dug a 100-foot wide crater in the pre-dawn blackness and put Alamogordo on the map.

The events of Monday, September 26, 1983 are additional tokens of grief and infamy for Alamogordo.

The scene was the city dump. Although Atari officials in El Paso, Texas, could not be reached for comment, onlookers said 11 truckloads of Atari video games and computer hardware (1200 XL's?) were dumped. Following this, and under the watchful eye of Atari security guard Captain Javier Barrera, a huge bulldozer ran back and forth over the equipment, pulverizing it as completely as an asteroid from the Atari game of the same name.

Those watching the operation said it included cassettes of games such as E.T., Pacman and Ms. Pacman, 2600 game consoles and "high-priced personal computers."

The only definitive comment on the whole operation came from Browning-Farris Industries, the operators of the landfill. They said the only thing they know was that Atari paid them a few extra thousand dollars for permission to dump the merchandise.

SAN DIEGO ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

is an independent, nonprofit organization and user's group with no connection to ATARI Corporation, a Warner Communication Company. Membership fees are currently \$10.00 annually from January 1983 to January 1984. Membership includes free access to the computer program library, subscription to "The I/O Connector", and classes, when held. Permission to reprint articles in any noncommercial publication is permitted, without written authorization, as long as proper credit is given.

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SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

are rare, because generally nobody gets up off their duff to sit down at the keyboard and produce ideas, opinions, reviews or anything of even the slightest interest to the group. When received, they cause the editor to turn inside out with happiness. Deadline is the 28th of the month. Thanks.

SYN-APPS UPDATE

The Connector has been following with some interest the development of the SYN-APPS home/business applications software from Synapse.

The programs have been described as "super user-friendly." They are designed for the transitional Atari owner who is getting deeper into business applications, as well as experienced users in this area. Most interestingly of all, the programs are intercompatible, i.e. they share and exchange data with each other. Thus, as a group, they form a total applications package.

The programs are named:

Syn-Text
Syn-File+
Syn-Trend
Syn-Calc
Syn-Stock
Syn-Comm
Syn-Stat
Syn-Tax
Syn-Mail

The straight poop on SYN-TEXT is unavailable at present, due to changes in design. The best information available is that this one will be a souped-up AtariWriter. More on this one later.

SYN-FILE+ is an adaptation of the Filemanager series from Synapse. This program forms the pithy core of the Syn-Apps programs. Compatible with Axlon 128K memory expansion, 80 column boards, and double density drives, Syn-File+ holds up to 29,000 records on up to 16 disks. This is forty times more record keeping power than any other Atari database program. Alpha, numeric, calculated, date, table look-up, and conditional fields are all supported. Mainframe style operation allows access to four files simultaneously. A report generator prints lists and labels in any format, and provides page and level breaks, as well as subtotals.

SYN-TREND is a comprehensive graphing and forecasting tool. It will take data from other Syn-Apps programs or VisiCalc and generate hi-res, full color line, scatter, bar and pie charts. Line and scatter graphs can display up to three factors of 100 observations each. Bar graphs display up to three factors and 32 observations in stacked or clustered format. Pie charts up to 16 slices. Graphs can be printed using a variety of printers.

Additionally, automatic or manual axis scaling, time series analysis by moving averages, exponential smoothing, and linear regression are possible.

SYN-CALC is described as a second generation spreadsheet program for the Atari. Menu-driven, Syn-Calc carries features like individually variable column widths, logic functions, and sorting. An "on-board editor" allows the user to edit long, complex formulae without retyping.

Multiple spreadsheets can be linked for consolidation and roll-ups. Compatible with 80 column boards and Axlon 128K rampower. Users can generate 80 column formats and can utilize 120K of workspace, six times more than VisiCalc.

SYN-STOCK is a stock charting and analysis program compatible with Compuserve and The Source.

SYN-COMM is a fine-scrolling communications program featuring autodial capabilities and multiple text buffers.

SYN-STAT provides a user-friendly tutorial/application program for statistical analysis including hypothesis testing, ANOVA, and non-parametric statistics.

SYN-TAX is the Syn-Apps aid for preparing Federal Income Tax forms.

SYN-MAIL features a mini-database management program appropriate for maintaining mailing lists and printing labels.

Preliminary indications are that some of the programs will be available in the late fall.

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COMPUTER WORKSHOP

How many of you have struggled with that new database system, word processor, or spreadsheet program and wondered what in the world you had gotten yourself into? I've spent a lot of time working with DATA PERFECT and I'm still not sure I know all of it's capabilities. Did you know that ATARIWRITER gives you the capability of putting two columns of text on the same page? How about merging two different models in VISICALC?

The Atari has some pretty good business software available but we haven't dedicated many monthly meetings to the subject. Judging from the membership applications, there is a lot of interest in this area. I think it might be fun to compare notes on the things we are doing on our Atari computers besides games and utilities. I don't pretend to be an expert on Atari business software, but I do get quite a few calls from people trying to get their systems to work.

If you are having some trouble selecting your software or learning how to use it properly, there are surely some members that would be willing to help you out. If you have already been through the learning curve, then there are a lot of us who could use some of your expertise. If you don't fall into one of those two categories, then you must have just bought your computer or you don't have any time to use it! Whether you need help yourself, would like to help others, or would just like to get together and trade lies and stuff, we would like to hear from you. Give me a call most any evening or catch me at the meetings and if there is enough interest, we'll get something going.

- Norm Davis

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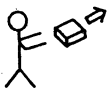
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Choplifter (disk), \$20; Star Raiders (cart), \$25; Caverns of Mars, (cass), \$10; Atari Demo (2 cass), \$10. Cliff, 280-7771.

ETC.

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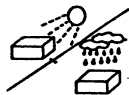
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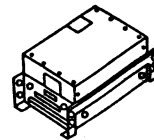


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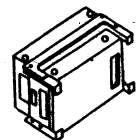


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The I/O Connector

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OUR NEXT MEETING,

October 17, 1983

6:30 p.m.

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